

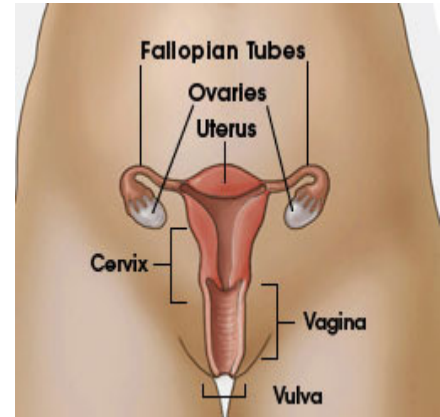
PRESS RELEASE

JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Cancer is a disease which causes the body to grow abnormal cells. The type of cancer is based on the part of the body where it originates, even if it spreads to other body parts later.

When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer. The cervix, part of the female reproductive system, is the lower, narrow end of the uterus.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the main cause of cervical cancer. HPV is a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sex. At least half of sexually active people will have HPV at some point in their lives.



Cervical cancer is highly preventable because of screening tests (such as the Pap test) and the **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**, which prevents HPV infections. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and a good quality of life.

Who Gets Cervical Cancer?

According to the U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group publication, *United States Cancer Statistics: 1999–2007 Incidence and Mortality Web-based Report*, all women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over age 30. Each year, approximately 12,000 women in the United States gets cervical cancer. The Guam Cancer Registry reports that from 2003 to 2007, 31 women on Guam were diagnosed with cervical cancer, and 15 women died. Cervical cancer is the 6th common cancer diagnosed in Guam's women at 4.5% (31) of all cancers (694), and accounted for 5.3% (15) of all women's cancer deaths (281).

The Department of Public Health and Social Services, along with the Guam Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Medical Advisory Body, the Guam Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition, and community partners in cancer control and prevention, encourage women 9 to 26 years old to talk to their doctor about HPV vaccine; and women 21-years or older about cervical cancer screening. It could save your life!

For more information about a **free Pap test**, call the Guam Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program at 735-0671/72; for information about the HPV vaccine, call the Guam Immunization Program at 735-7143 or 734-1340.